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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 KHARTOUM 05792

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TAGS: PHUM SU

SUBJECT: ISLAMIZATION OF SOUTHERN SUDAN: DESENSITIZED  
VERSION

REF: STATE 307709

1. PER DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST, AND RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNHRC RAPPORTEUR'S WORK, WE HAVE TRANSMITTED A DESENSITIZED VERSION OF KHARTOUM 4769 BELOW. WE HAVE TRIED TO ELIMINATED DIRECT REFERENCES TO SOURCES AND OTHER IDENTIFYING DETAILS. THE CABLE NEVERTHELESS CONTAINS INFORMATION, SUCH AS THE REPORT THAT THE DA'WA TURNS AWAY NON-MUSLIMS WHEN DISTRIBUTING ASSISTANCE, WHICH COULD INVITE NEGATIVE REACTION IF MADE PUBLIC. THEREFORE THIS CABLE SHOULD BE USED ONLY RPT ONLY FOR MR. RIBEIRO'S BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

#### INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

2. SUMMARY: THERE IS CLEAR AND MOUNTING EVIDENCE THAT THE NIF-DOMINATED GOVERNMENT IN KHARTOUM HAS EMBARKED ON A CAMPAIGN TO ISLAMIZE SOUTHERN SUDAN AND THOSE SOUTHERNERS, MOSTLY DISPLACED, LIVING IN THE NORTH. IN GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED AREAS OF THE SOUTH, THE GOS/NIF IS UNDERTAKING POLICIES TO GAIN ISLAMIC CONTROL OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND THE CIVIL SERVICE. OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE SENIOR AND MIDDLE RANKS OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AND CIVIL SERVICE HAVE BEEN "WEEDED-OUT", WITH MUSLIM-SOUTHERNERS AND HARDLINE GOS/NIF SUPPORTERS REPLACING PROFESSIONAL SENIOR OFFICERS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES. FURTHERMORE, AS A RESULT OF GOS EDUCATIONAL POLICIES, NON-MUSLIM CHILDREN IN THE GOS-CONTROLLED TOWNS OF JUBA, RENK, MALAKAL, WAU, AND RAJA ARE COMPELLED TO LEARN ARABIC AND STUDY ISLAM. SCHOOLS ARE REQUIRED TO USE ARABIC AS THE SOLE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION, EVEN SCHOOLS RUN BY CHRISTIANS. IN JUBA, THE EQUATORIA STATE MINISTER OF EDUCATION RECENTLY DECREED THAT ISLAM MUST BE TAUGHT BEGINNING AT THE NURSERY SCHOOL LEVEL.

3. IN THE NORTH, NON-MUSLIM, SOUTHERNERS FACE ROUTINE HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION, CONCURRENTLY RECEIVING THE MESSAGE THAT IF THEY BECOME MUSLIMS, THEIR LIVES WILL IMPROVE. ISLAMIC GROUPS, MOST NOTABLY THE DA'WA ISLAMIYYA (I.E. THE ISLAMIC CALL), REPORTEDLY OFFER AID IN THE FORM OF FOOD AND MONEY TO INDUCE SOUTHERNERS TO BECOME MUSLIMS. GOS/NIF POLICY HAS MADE CONVERSION TO ISLAM CONVENIENT, OFTEN PROFITABLE, AND SOMETIMES NECESSARY FOR SURVIVAL IN THE NORTH.

4. IN ADDITION, THE GOS IS ESCALATING PRESSURE ON CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS PERSONNEL AND INSTITUTIONS. REPORTS OF HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND INCARCERATION OF CHURCH PERSONNEL HAVE INCREASED IN RECENT MONTHS. MANY BELIEVE THAT THIS IS EVIDENCE OF GOS/NIF INTENTION TO EVENTUALLY ERADICATE THE "FOREIGN" CHURCH PRESENCE FROM SUDAN, THEREBY, THE GOS/NIF HOPES, LEAVING THE FIELD OPEN FOR ISLAM.

5. THE GOS/NIF IS DETERMINED TO LAUNCH A SUCCESSFUL ISLAMIZATION CAMPAIGN. IT HAS CONSOLIDATED ITS HOLD OVER LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN GOS-CONTROLLED AREAS OF THE SOUTH, WITH THE REPUTED LONG-TERM GOAL OF INTRODUCING ISLAMIC LAW TO THE SOUTH. ALSO IMPORTANT IS THE EFFECT GOS/NIF POLICIES HAVE ON SOUTHERN CHILDREN. THESE CHILDREN ARE COMPELLED TO LEARN ARABIC AND ISLAM AND ARE LEARNING TO LOOK TO MUSLIMS FOR FOOD AND AID. THEY ARE ALSO ABSORBING THE LESSON THAT NON-MUSLIMS PROBABLY HAVE

LITTLE HOPE OR FUTURE IN SUDAN. END SUMMARY.

#### GOVERNMENT IN THE SOUTH

16. IN 1990, THE GOS DECLARED A FEDERAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT FOR SUDAN, OSTENSIBLY GIVING GOS-CONTROLLED AREAS OF THE SOUTH A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF AUTONOMY AND EXEMPTING THEM FROM SHARIA (I.E. ISLAMIC LAW). SUBSEQUENTLY, HOWEVER, KHARTOUM BEGAN A LARGE-SCALE PURGE OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND THE CIVIL SERVICE, REPLACING MANY NON-MUSLIMS WITH SOUTHERN MUSLIMS AND GOS/NIF HARDLINE SUPPORTERS.

17. SOUTHERN SUDAN IS DIVIDED INTO THREE STATES: UPPER NILE, BAHR EL GHAZAL, AND EQUATORIA. EACH STATE HAS A GOVERNOR, DEPUTY GOVERNOR, AND A POPULAR COMMITTEE. THE GOVERNORS, APPOINTED BY KHARTOUM, ARE ALL NON-MUSLIM SOUTHERNERS. FOLLOWING ITS DECLARATION OF FEDERALISM, THE GOS APPOINTED HARDCORE NIF SUPPORTERS AS DEPUTY GOVERNORS AND AS STATE MINISTERS OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE, FINANCE AND COMMERCE. THESE APPOINTEES REPORTEDLY ANSWER ONLY TO KHARTOUM. THE DEPUTY GOVERNORS, AND NOT THE GOVERNORS AS BEFORE, HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THESE KEY MINISTRIES. IT IS ALSO RELIABLY REPORTED THAT THESE STATE MINISTERS HAVE PURGED, OR ARE IN THE PROCESS OF PURGING, THEIR STAFFS OF NON-MUSLIMS AND NON-NIF SUPPORTERS. THE GOVERNORS HAVE THUS BEEN EFFECTIVELY STRIPPED OF MOST REAL POWER. IN ADDITION, ON AUGUST 8, TWO SENIOR AND PROMINENT SOUTHERN GOVERNORS WERE REPLACED (REF). THE NEW GOVERNORS ARE ALSO NON-MUSLIM SOUTHERNERS BUT BOTH MEN ARE FIRM SUPPORTERS OF THE NIF. (NOTE: IN A NATIONALLY-TELEVISED SWEARING-IN CEREMONY, THE NEWLY-APPOINTED GOVERNORS WERE SHOWN TAKING THE OATH OF OFFICE, ONE HAND RAISED, THE OTHER ON THE KORAN. END NOTE.

18. IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT SOME OFFICIALS IN THE SENIOR AND MIDDLE RANKS OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND CIVIL SERVICE IN GOS-CONTROLLED AREAS HAVE BEEN "WEEDED-OUT" AND REPLACED BY MUSLIM-SOUTHERNERS AND HARDLINE GOS/NIF SUPPORTERS. HISTORICALLY, THE BEST SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTH HAVE BEEN CHURCH SCHOOLS, SO THE BEST-EDUCATED AND MOST EXPERIENCED CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE SOUTH ARE OFTEN CHRISTIANS. MANY OF THOSE REPLACING THEM ARE LESS QUALIFIED AND LACK EXPERIENCE; THEIR ONLY QUALIFICATION IS THAT THEY ARE MUSLIMS. FORCED RETIREMENT OF NON-MUSLIMS AND NON-NIF SUPPORTERS HAS BECOME WIDESPREAD.

19. IN JULY 1991, A GOS-CONTROLLED NEWSPAPER REPORTED THAT THE EQUATORIA POPULAR COMMITTEE HAD BEEN GIVEN LEGISLATIVE POWERS, AND THAT THE COMMITTEE WOULD HENCEFORTH FORMULATE AND PASS LOCAL LAWS. (NOTE: THE POPULAR COMMITTEES IN BAHR AL GHAZAL AND UPPER NILE WILL APPARENTLY HAVE THE SAME MANDATE, ALTHOUGH THERE HAS AS YET BEEN NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THEY ARE CURRENTLY OPERATING IN THIS MANNER. END NOTE) THIS IS IN CONTRAST, THE NEWSPAPER POINTED OUT, TO THE POPULAR COMMITTEES IN THE NORTH WHICH ARE SOLELY CONSULTATIVE AND REGULATORY BODIES. THE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTHERN POPULAR COMMITTEES, IT WAS REPORTED, WILL BE "SELECTED" TO "REPRESENT THE PEOPLE UNTIL ELECTIONS ARE HELD." ELECTIONS, THE NEWSPAPER EXPLAINED, CANNOT BE HELD NOW BECAUSE OF THE CIVIL WAR.

110. COMMENT: IT IS REPORTED THAT MONEY, HOUSES, AND POWER, IS USED BY THE GOS OFTEN TO GAIN THE SUPPORT OF SOUTHERNERS WHO ARE THEN APPOINTED TO THE POPULAR COMMITTEES. THUS, SOME SOUTHERN POLITICIANS, FOR FINANCIAL GAIN, SUPPORT THE GOS/NIF AND ITS POLICIES. THERE IS SOME FEAR THAT THE POPULAR COMMITTEES/ASSEMBLIES WILL EVENTUALLY BE USED TO "OPT INTO SHARIA." IN HIS SPEECH OF DECEMBER 31, PRESIDENT AL-BASHIR SAID "THE LEGAL SITUATION IN THE SOUTHERN STATES WILL REMAIN AS IT IS UNTIL ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW LEGISLATIVE BODIES THAT WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED...." BECAUSE OF THE VAGUENESS OF THIS STATEMENT, BASHIR MAY HAVE SUBTLY OPENED UP THE

POSSIBILITY THAT SHARIA MIGHT ONE DAY BE LEGISLATED FOR THE SOUTH. THE MAJORITY OF SOUTHERNERS ARE NOT MUSLIMS AND, BY ALL INDICATIONS, DO NOT WANT TO BE GOVERNED BY ISLAMIC LAW. THERE IS FEAR THAT THE GOS/NIF WILL MANIPULATE THE POPULAR COMMITTEES SO THEY WILL VOTE TO MAKE SHARIA LAW IN THE SOUTH. END COMMENT.

THE CIVIL SERVICE  
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¶11. IN 1991, THE GOS REPORTEDLY RECONSTITUTED THE CIVIL SERVICE IN SUDAN. PREVIOUSLY, NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN SUDAN EACH HAD THEIR OWN SEPARATE CIVIL SERVICE. UNDER THE NEW LAWS, SUDAN HAS A SINGLE CIVIL SERVICE ADMINISTERED BY AUTHORITIES IN KHARTOUM. GOS-APPOINTED "SECRETARY GENERALS," ALL KNOWN NIF SUPPORTERS, DIRECTLY CONTROL THE CIVIL BUREAUCRACY IN EACH SOUTHERN STATE. THROUGH THE SECRETARY GENERALS, THE GOS/NIF CONTROLS RECRUITMENT OF NEW EMPLOYEES, JOB ASSIGNMENTS, AND PROMOTIONS. THERE ARE REPORTS OF NON-MUSLIMS BEING SIDESTEPED FOR PROMOTIONS, SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS BEING REPLACED BY INEXPERIENCED NIF SUPPORTERS, AND NUMEROUS INSTANCES OF FORCED RETIREMENT OF NON-MUSLIMS AND NON-NIF SUPPORTERS.

ISLAMIZATION/ARABIZATION OF EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH  
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¶12. IN ADDITION TO POLICIES DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN GOS/NIF CONTROL OVER SOUTHERN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, THE EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM IN THE SOUTH IS BEING ARABIZED AND ISLAMIZED. REPORTEDLY, THE EQUATORIA STATE MINISTER OF EDUCATION RECENTLY DECREED THAT ISLAM BE A COMPULSORY SUBJECT IN ALL NURSERY SCHOOLS IN JUBA (NOTE: STUDENTS CANNOT ENTER PRIMARY SCHOOL UNLESS THEY HAVE COMPLETED NURSERY SCHOOL. END NOTE). IN JUBA, IT IS REPORTEDLY ALSO OFFICIAL POLICY THAT ALL SCHOOLS, INCLUDING THOSE RUN BY CHRISTIANS, MUST USE ARABIC AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION, AND ENGLISH MAY NOT BE INTRODUCED AS A SUBJECT UNTIL THE FIFTH GRADE.

¶13. IN MALAKAL, IN UPPER NILE STATE, THE ONLY SCHOOL STILL OPEN IS RUN BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH (NOTE: ALL OTHER SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN TAKEN OVER AS GOS-ARMY BARRACKS. END NOTE). REPORTEDLY, THE UPPER NILE MINISTER OF EDUCATION INFORMED THE SCHOOL IN JULY THAT ARABIC MUST BE THE SOLE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION.

¶14. GOS/NIF POLICY HAS LED TO A PROLIFERATION OF "KHALWAS," I.E. ISLAMIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS, IN GOS-CONTROLLED AREAS OF THE SOUTH. STUDENTS NOT ATTENDING THESE SCHOOLS ARE AT A DISADVANTAGE WHEN THEY GO ON TO SECONDARY SCHOOL SINCE THEY LACK SKILLS IN ARABIC. MOREOVER, PROPOSED NEW NATIONAL LEGISLATION WOULD MAKE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF ISLAMIC AND ARABIC STUDIES AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL COMPULSORY FOR CONTINUING ON TO UNIVERSITY STUDIES.

¶15. REPORTEDLY, NORTHERN SECURITY FORCES, PRESENT IN GOS-CONTROLLED CITIES SINCE LAST YEAR, SOMETIMES BRING NON-MUSLIM CHILDREN INTO THE KHALWAS AGAINST THE WISHES OF THEIR PARENTS. TO WHOM OR WHAT INSTITUTIONS THESE FORCES ARE ACCOUNTABLE IS UNKNOWN.

"RICE MUSLIMS" IN THE SOUTH  
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¶16. AT THE MOST BASIC LEVEL, SOUTHERNERS ARE BEING CONVERTED TO ISLAM WITH FOOD AND MONEY. THROUGHOUT GOS-CONTROLLED AREAS OF THE SOUTH THE THREAT OF STARVATION IS VERY REAL. OPERATING IN THESE AREAS ARE MUSLIM GROUPS, MOST NOTABLY THE DA'WA, WHICH DISTRIBUTE FOOD AND OTHER AID. THEY REPORTEDLY GIVE AID ONLY TO THOSE PEOPLE WHO DECLARE THEMSELVES TO BE MUSLIMS AND REGISTER AS SUCH. SIMILARLY, GOS/NIF-SUPPORTED KHALWAS

PROVIDE FOOD FOR THEIR STUDENTS AND OFFER OTHER FORMS OF AID, WHILE GOS-RESTRICTIONS ON CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE SIMILAR ASSISTANCE. EVEN SOME DEVOUTLY CHRISTIAN PARENTS SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO THESE SCHOOLS RATHER THAN DEPRIVE THEM OF FOOD. THERE ARE ISOLATED REPORTS OF MONEY AND FOOD BEING OFFERED TO PREGNANT MOTHERS TO REGISTER THEIR NEWBORNS AS MUSLIMS AND OF PARENTS BEING PAID TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO KHALWAS.

¶17. COMMENT: SOME BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE MAJORITY OF SOUTHERNERS CONVERTING TO ISLAM ARE "RICE MUSLIMS, I.E. THAT THEY ARE DOING SO SOLELY BECAUSE THEY WANT FOOD. FEW HAVE ACTUALLY ACCEPTED ISLAM AND IT IS BELIEVED THAT MOST OF THEM WILL REVERT TO THEIR FORMER RELIGION WHEN STARVATION IS NOT A CONSTANT THREAT.

¶18. OF MORE LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCE, HOWEVER, IS THE EFFECT ISLAMIZATION MAY HAVE ON CHILDREN IN GOS-CONTROLLED AREAS. A GENERATION OF NON-MUSLIM CHILDREN NOW SPEAK BETTER ARABIC THAN THEIR TRIBAL LANGUAGE AND ARE TAKING TO ISLAMIC CUSTOMS. WHEN THEY ARE HUNGRY THEY CAN GO TO THE KHALWA, TO THE MOSQUE, OR TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE DA'WA, BUT THEY CANNOT EXPECT THE SAME PROVISIONS FROM THE NEEDY CHURCHES. END COMMENT.

... AND IN THE NORTH

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¶19. IN THE NORTH, WHERE AS MUCH AS ONE-QUARTER OF THE POPULATION OF SOUTHERN SUDAN IS NOW DISPLACED (AS MANY AS 2,500,000 PEOPLE), THE NEED FOR AID IS ACUTE. MOST DISPLACED LIVE IN CAMPS OUTSIDE KHARTOUM, WITH MEAGER FACILITIES AND FEW RESOURCES. AS IN THE SOUTH, ISLAMIC GROUPS, INCLUDING THE DA'WA, DISPENSE RELIEF. THIS RELIEF IS, ONCE AGAIN, RESERVED FOR MUSLIMS. REPORTEDLY, REFUGEES SEEKING FOOD ARE ASKED TO GIVE THEIR NAMES. IF THEY GIVE A MUSLIM NAME, THEY ARE GIVEN FOOD; IF THEY GIVE A CHRISTIAN NAME, THEY ARE NOT. THESE REFUGEES HAVE THE OPTION, OF COURSE, OF CONVERTING, TAKING A MUSLIM NAME, AND THEN RECEIVING FOOD. (NOTE: IN ISLAM, A SIMPLE DECLARATION IS ALL THAT IS REQUIRED FOR CONVERSION. END NOTE)

¶20. NON-MUSLIM SOUTHERNERS IN THE NORTH ARE ROUTINELY DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN SCHOOLS, THE WORKPLACE, AND IN THEIR EVERYDAY EXISTENCE. AT THE SAME TIME IT IS MADE CLEAR THAT IF THEY BECOME MUSLIMS THEIR LIVES WILL BE MUCH EASIER. MANY SOURCES REPORT THAT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, NON-MUSLIM CHILDREN ARE HARASSED, GIRLS ARE PROPOSITIONED AND INSULTED, AND NON-MUSLIM STUDENTS ARE OFTEN GRADED UNFAIRLY. THEY ALSO ARE COMPELLED TO STUDY ARABIC AND ISLAM. ALTHOUGH SOME SCHOOLS, RUN BY SOUTHERNERS, EXIST IN THE DISPLACED CAMPS, REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE GOS/NIF PLANS TO TAKE CONTROL OF THEM. THE GOS DESIRES TO PLACE MUSLIM NORTHERNERS AS INSTRUCTORS TO TEACH ARABIC AND ISLAM TO THE DISPLACED. AS WITH THE SOUTH, GOS/NIF ISLAMIZATION POLICIES ARE CLEARLY AIMED AT CHILDREN OF SOUTHERNERS. SUCH POLICIES HAVE SERIOUS LONG-TERM RAMIFICATIONS FOR NON-MUSLIMS IN THE NORTH.

¶21. SOUTHERNERS ALSO OFTEN HAVE DIFFICULTY FINDING EMPLOYMENT. OUR SOURCES REPORT THAT CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES ARE FREQUENTLY SINGLED OUT FOR JOBS WHICH REQUIRE THEM TO WORK DURING SUNDAY MASS OR ON THEIR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS. IN KHARTOUM THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS REPORTS OF CHRISTIANS BEING EVICTED FROM THEIR HOMES BY MUSLIM LANDLORDS.

¶22. IN ADDITION TO THIS OVERT DISCRIMINATION, SOUTHERNERS IN THE NORTH ARE BEING EFFECTIVELY ISLAMIZED BY THEIR ENVIRONMENT. SOUTHERNERS IN THE NORTH KEEP AN ISLAMIC WORK WEEK (SUN-THURS). THEY RECEIVE BONUSES AND VACATIONS FROM THEIR EMPLOYERS FOR RAMADAN AND THE EID, BUT NOT FOR CHRISTMAS OR EASTER; THEIR FAMILIES THUS ARE BEGINNING TO CELEBRATE ISLAMIC HOLIDAYS. SOME CHRISTIAN SOUTHERNERS HAVE ALSO BEGUN TAKING PART IN GOS-SPONSORED

"MASS MARRIAGES." THIS IS A PRACTICE INTRODUCED BY THE GOS IN RECENT MONTHS TO PROMOTE THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE AS A SOCIALLY STABILIZING FORCE. PUBLIC CEREMONIES ARE CONDUCTED IN WHICH LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE ARE MARRIED BEFORE MUSLIM AND, IN A FEW CASES, CHRISTIAN CLERGY. COUPLES MARRYING IN THESE MASS CEREMONIES RECEIVE MONEY AND GIFTS FROM THE GOVERNMENT. MANY SOUTHERN WOMEN IN THE NORTH ARE DONNING THE TRADITIONAL NORTHERN FEMALE DRESS, THE TOBE. THE TOBE IS A GARMENT WHICH COVERS A WOMAN UP FROM HEAD TO FOOT BUT NOT THE FACE. THOSE WOMEN WHO WEAR THE TOBE ARE GENERALLY SPARED SOME HARASSMENT.

123. COMMENT: AS A RESULT OF THEIR ENVIRONMENT AND THE GOS/NIF'S ISLAMIZATION CAMPAIGN, MANY SOUTHERNERS IN THE NORTH NOW SPEAK ARABIC, STUDY ISLAM, AND TAKE TO ISLAMIC CUSTOMS. BOTH YOUNG AND OLD ALIKE ARE GIVEN THE SAME MESSAGE, BLATANTLY OR SUBTLY--THAT IT IS BETTER TO BE A MUSLIM THAN A NON-MUSLIM. GOS/NIF POLICIES HAVE ACCORDINGLY MADE BECOMING A MUSLIM CONVENIENT, OFTEN PROFITABLE, AND SOMETIMES NECESSARY FOR SURVIVAL IN THE NORTH. END COMMENT

#### RECEPTIVITY TO ISLAM

124. SOME SOUTHERNERS, WHETHER LIVING IN THE NORTH OR THE SOUTH, ARE REPORTEDLY MORE RECEPTIVE TO ISLAM THAN OTHERS, DEPENDING ON THEIR TRIBAL AND REGIONAL BACKGROUND. FOR EXAMPLE, THE TRIBES IN THE UPPER NILE REGION (DINKA, SHILLUK, NUER) ARE REPORTEDLY LESS SUSCEPTIBLE TO ISLAMIZATION, GIVEN THEIR STRONG TRIBAL TRADITIONS AND STRUCTURES. THEIR CULTURAL BACKGROUND, INCLUDING EXPERIENCE WITH SLAVERY AND COLONIALISM, ALSO MAKES THEM SUSPICIOUS OF OUTSIDE INFLUENCE. TRIBES IN EQUATORIA ARE, APPARENTLY, NOT AT ALL OPEN TO ISLAM. EQUATORIA HAS NO BORDERS WITH THE NORTH AND THERE HAS BEEN HISTORICALLY LITTLE CONTACT OR ASSIMILATION. MOST EQUATORIANS ARE FOLLOWERS OF TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS AND THEY MAINTAIN STRONG CULTURAL AND TRIBAL CUSTOMS. SLAVERY AND ITS ATTENDANT WARFARE HAVE MADE THEM HOSTILE TO OUTSIDERS, ESPECIALLY MUSLIMS.

125. IN CONTRAST, TRIBES LIVING ON THE BORDER WITH THE NORTH, DUE TO LONG-TERM INTERACTION WITH NORTHERNERS, ARE ALREADY SOMEWHAT ASSIMILATED AND THUS MAY BE MORE RECEPTIVE TO ISLAM. THE TRIBES IN BAHR EL GHAZAL, IN SOUTH EASTERN SUDAN, HAVE HISTORICALLY INTERMARRIED AND MIXED WITH THE NORTHERNERS LIVING ON THEIR BORDERS. THEY HAVE ASSIMILATED FOR CONVENIENCE AND ARE, AS A RESULT, MORE EASILY ISLAMIZED.

#### HARASSMENT OF CHURCHES

126. THE ACTIVITIES OF NON-MUSLIM RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING SCHOOLS, HAVE BEEN SHARPLY CURTAILED BY THE GOS. USING THE 1962 FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY ACT AS A TOOL, THE GOS FORBIDS THE BUILDING OF CHURCHES, CHURCH FACILITIES (INCLUDING SCHOOLS) AND THE ORGANIZATION OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES. CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS ARE MONITORED CLOSELY AND THE AMOUNT OF FUNDS THEY MAY EXPEND IS LIMITED BY GOS REGULATIONS. IN THE GOS-CONTROLLED AREAS OF THE SOUTH, NUMEROUS MOSQUES AND KHALWAS ARE BEING BUILT WHILE CHURCHES CONTINUE TO BE DENIED PERMITS TO BUILD OR REPAIR FACILITIES.

127. CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS PERSONNEL THROUGHOUT SUDAN ARE ROUTINELY HARASSED AND INTIMIDATED. RECENTLY THE GOS INCARCERATED A CATHOLIC PRIEST AND THREE OF HIS STAFF IN DONGOLA, IN NORTHERN SUDAN, AND TRIED TO EXPEL FOUR OF MOTHER TERESA'S MISSIONARIES. SOME MAINTAIN THAT THIS IS EVIDENCE OF GOS/NIF INTENTION TO EVENTUALLY ERADICATE THE "FOREIGN" CHURCH PRESENCE FROM SUDAN, THUS LEAVING THE FIELD OPEN TO ISLAM.

COMMENT AND CONCLUSION

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¶28. THERE IS LITTLE REASON TO DOUBT THAT THIS NIF-DOMINATED GOVERNMENT HOPES TO ISLAMIZE SOUTHERN SUDAN AND THOSE SOUTHERNERS LIVING IN THE NORTH. GOS/NIF POLICIES SEEM DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT THEIR SUPPORTERS WILL DOMINATE SOUTHERN POLITICS. SUCH TACTICS FUEL FEARS THAT THE SOUTH WILL EVENTUALLY BE GOVERNED BY SHARIA. THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CHURCH, ALREADY UNFRIENDLY AND INHOSPITABLE, IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE OBSTRUCTIONIST. MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE CHILDREN OF SOUTHERNERS, THE NEXT GENERATION OF SOUTHERN CITIZENS AND LEADERS, ARE BEING AGGRESSIVELY ISLAMIZED AND ARABIZED. THE IMPLICATIONS FOR SUDAN'S FUTURE, IF THIS EFFORT IS SUCCESSFUL, WILL BE RADICAL AND TRANSFORMING AND WILL IMPACT ON THE STABILITY OF THE ENTIRE REGION.

CHEEK